

---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### Surinamese Government Rejects Dutch Allegations

The Government of Suriname has totally rejected Dutch drug smuggling allegations made against Advisor of State, Desire Bouterse, calling them "**politically motivated**". Bouterse himself described them as "baseless and fabricated".

The Dutch are nothing if not persistent," he said. "I intervened with the army on February 25, 1980 to check the slide back into colonialism. From then, the Dutch have regarded me as their enemy. There have been five unsuccessful coup attempts since then, plus a number of attempts on my life. There has even been a civil war paid for with Dutch money."

He maintains that the drug smuggling charges are only the latest twist in a long saga of Dutch plots and schemes to get rid of him so that they can recolonise Suriname. "Nobody in Suriname except my political enemies believe that I have ever had anything to do with drugs. The Dutch know this only too well. That is why they have been forced to rely totally on **anonymous witnesses**, people who are already in jail; people who are only too willing to accept bribes in return for saying what the Dutch want them to say."

Bouterse says no man in his right mind would choose to be part of a sham trial where accusations are based on the testimony of **anonymous witnesses** who cannot be required to appear in court, and who therefore **cannot be cross-examined**.

Holland had earlier demanded that Interpol issue a warrant for his arrest. However, in response to inquiries made by the Government of Suriname, Interpol replied that "**since**

**the case opposes two countries, the Supervisory Board is not competent at this stage**". Commenting further, it advised that, "the use of Interpol's warrant violates Article 3 of the Constitution (of Interpol). What this means is that Interpol recognises the political nature of the allegations.

**There have been five attempted coups** since the military intervention of 1980. The first came in 1980 shortly after the intervention. The most recent was in 1997. The civilian court has sentenced 15 of the 30 persons involved in the latest attempt to prison. One of the conspirators, on the run from the police at five o'clock in the morning, found his way to the Dutch Embassy where he asked for and obtained temporary asylum.

In 1986, a private in the Surinamese army robbed a bank, fled to the interior and started calling himself a guerilla leader. "The Dutch supported him with arms, money and training. He was able to hire European mercenaries to kill Surinamese. The Dutch really loved him. They called him "Robin Hood" and "the Great Liberator". He was invited to Holland, feted, and even introduced to Dutch Parliamentarians," Bouterse said.

The army defeated Brunswijk and his so-called Jungle Commando finally in 1989, but not before he had managed to destroy much of the infrastructure in the interior, including roads, bridges and power lines. "The Dutch Government had tried to build him up as a conquering hero who would hand Suriname to them on a platter, but he was just a bandit at heart," Bouterse said.

He established a political party after the war with Dutch help, but was unable to mobilise support even among his own people. **He failed to win any seats in the subsequent elections.** Bouterse's National Democratic Party, on the other hand, won **six of the ten seats in the interior.** "The drug allegations came up after everything else failed. After the coup attempts, after the assassination attempts, and after the failure of the Jungle Commando. God Almighty has preserved me from my enemies, and I thank Him."

The Dutch have tried on several occasions to draw him into the cocaine trap, Bouterse said. "But since I never had any interest in the trade, I was unaware of what they expected of me until a Dutch Parliamentary Commission investigating the drug trade, laid bare the facts about Dutch Government involvement in the traffic using Suriname as a trans-shipment point."

One of the findings of the **Van Traa Parliamentary Commission** was that Dutch authorities moved huge quantities of cocaine through Suriname for sale on the European market. They were hoping at the same time to be able to trap Bouterse if indeed he was involved in the traffic. Something went wrong in one instance and the Surinamese authorities caught the people involved. According to the report, Van Traa the chairman of the Commission, asked a senior official of the Netherlands Government what was done with the money made from the sale of the cocaine. The official replied that the money was placed in the "pleasant surprises account" with the Netherlands Central Bank.

Meanwhile, of the four persons arrested in Suriname, two were sentenced to prison. They managed to escape from jail however, and are now known to be living in Holland, according to Surinamese police sources. One is a security guard with the Dutch police. The other is studying law. Van Traa died in a bizarre traffic accident. His car was crushed

between two trucks. His report highlighting Dutch Government involvement in the cocaine trade however, is available in bookstores in Holland for interested members of the public to read.

Bouterse explained that contrary to propaganda put out by the Dutch and their allies, both in the region and internationally, the intervention by the army in 1980 did not result in a military dictatorship. Subsequent Governments of Suriname have all up to now been headed by a civilian.

In December 1986, the Government announced a **referendum** on the new Constitution to be held in September the following year. The promised elections were held in November 1987, and a new Government installed on November 25. The new Constitution defined the military as the vanguard of the revolution, and according to its terms, it was the duty of the military to protect and defend the Constitution. It was in accordance with that understanding that the army intervened again in December 1990. The Government resigned a new civilian interim Government was appointed, and elections promised within eight months.

Bouterse resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the Army in November 1992. The party, to which he belonged, the National Democratic Party, had won only three seats in 1987. In 1991, it won 12. He became chairman in 1993. In the 1996 elections the NDP won 16 seats. This made him leader of the largest party in Parliament. He is currently Advisor of State of the Government.

---

einde persbericht